

THE  
SPIRIT  
*of*  
YOUTH

*By*

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## THE SPIRIT OF YOUTH

### A TALK TO YOUNG THEOSOPHISTS

I FEEL that one of the first of my privileges on assuming the great office of President of the Theosophical Society is to greet the Youth in the Society who have been sent by the Future to hasten the world on its way of unfoldment.

Our Theosophical Society itself is an ambassador from the Court of the Future to the peoples of today. The truths of Theosophy, the outlook of Theosophy, the all-inclusiveness of Theosophy: for these the world is looking, though hardly conscious of its search. And when it begins to find, then the darker present shall fade away and the brighter future take its place.

You, brethren, know many of the truths of Theosophy — deep down in your eternal being, even though not always on that surface which is so much the creature of time. Your very membership of our Society is outward and visible sign of inward and certain knowledge. Somewhere you know that Universal Brotherhood is a fact; that a process of evolution pursues its irresistible way from the unconscious darkness of ignorance step by step to the self-conscious light of Wisdom, Power and Love; that Law and Order reign supreme; that Life is Justice and Love, be appearances what they may.

### THE CONSECRATION OF YOUTH

These truths *are* yours, and the world needs them sorely. And because they *are* yours, because the world needs them, the Spirit of the Future has consecrated you ambassadors of the Wisdom of tomorrow to the realms of the ignorance of today, so that many who are ready for release may begin to recognize the nature of their kingship, and grow eager to assume it.

I venture to think that many of you are members without, perhaps, knowing really why you joined. The way was open, circumstances lent themselves to membership: so you joined the Society. Thus did I join myself. How many of you joined because from the bottom of your hearts you felt that membership of the Theosophical Society was the most splendid of privileges, and that your lives must irrevocably be dedicated to its glorious service?

Some of you may have joined as a matter of course, because to join was a natural stage on your normal way. Some of you may have joined because of some temporary enthusiasm, and you have remained members because nothing has happened to determine your membership. Some of you, a few, may have joined because you belong to the company of those who ever form the advance-guard of humanity, and you knew that the Theosophical Society was part of such advance-guard. The Theosophical Society today sends forth that very call you heard



and followed in times gone by. Once again you hear the old familiar cry. As of old, once again you claim enrolment among your age-old comrades.

You joined, therefore, no matter how casual or superficial the outward visible reason, because of a deep inner and spiritual urge — either the urge to seize for the first time a tremendous opportunity, or the urge in this life to resume once more the sweet but heavy burden of the pioneer. In both cases your Higher Self perceived that membership of the Society would bring very great advantages, and determined to pay a possibly rare visit to its lower vehicles so as to ensure their co-operation. The visit was paid, and membership resulted. How are you to ensure that there shall be constant and harmonious co-operation in fulfilment of the will of yourself the King? The Higher Self cannot at present always stay. How shall the lower self constantly remember?

### THE DEDICATION OF YOUTH

First, the desires of the lower vehicles must not be permitted to play havoc with the plans of the Higher Self. The lower self must not be permitted to lead an existence separate from, antagonistic to, forgetful of, its Higher Progenitor. In other words, membership of the Society, and all that membership means, must be real and not nominal.

Second, this real membership must be made vivid and fiery in the outer world. In other words, membership must be a matter of pride and championship, never a matter of apology or concealment, still less of shame. It must be active, not passive. It must be alive, not dead.

Let us take the question of non-interference on the part of the lower vehicles with the will of the Higher Self. Young people often declare that they must have experience, that they must run through, pausing where they choose, the whole gamut of experiences such as those in which the world indulges today. "No doubt some day we shall settle down, but of what use to settle down unless and until we have had our experiences, have sown our wild oats? Unless and until we *know*, how can we *be*?"

The fact of the matter is that you have already had all the experiences in which the world is now indulging. You already do know. *Otherwise you would not have joined the Theosophical Society.* The Theosophical Society is a movement for those who, having had experiences enough and to spare, are impatient to be engaged in the next item on the evolutionary agenda — that of transmuting the experiences into power, into wisdom, into capacity, into vision, into understanding. The Theosophist has accumulated plenty of material. The organism and machinery of the Theosophical Society will help him to manufacture all these splendors out of it.

You are Theosophists, or at least members of the Theosophical Society — perhaps not quite the same thing. You have, therefore,

finished with the experiences of the lower nature. These really lie behind you, or, if you like, within you, even though in your new young lower bodies you do not quite remember them. If you will disentangle yourselves for a moment from the insistencies of the lower self, if you will transport yourselves into the splendid heights of your higher natures, you will see that in reality you belong to the mountain heights, even though you may be dwelling in the valleys or on the plains. You will see that you have finished with crowds, with the toys and circumstances of crowds, with the preoccupations of crowds, and that you have left the dust of crowds behind you for the clear and sparkling air of reverent independence and joyous leadership. A Theosophist is in spirit a leader, one who, beckoning to crowds, goes on his way rejoicing in the Light he has found; strong, sure, eager, happy.

You joined the Theosophical Society, were born perhaps in a Theosophical family, in order that you might live in a palace rather than in a hovel—in a palace of fine vision, inspiring dreams, rich thoughts, free aspiration, rather than in a hovel of conventionality, orthodoxy, imprisonment within set forms and colourless living. You were ready for freedom from the world, even though you still have to live in it. You were ready for freedom to know, to be, to do, to dare, to achieve, to be different. And membership of the Theosophical Society confers all these splendid possibilities upon you.

Furthermore, membership of the Theosophical Society brings you into comradeship with those who, like yourselves, are pioneers, seekers for truth—pioneers and seekers, it may be, journeying forth on ways vitally different from your own, discovering jewels of truth vitally unlike your own; yet pioneers and seekers no less than yourselves, and comrades in spirit though not in way or in discovery. And while membership of the Theosophical Society is doing this, insisting upon the reality of this smaller brotherhood within that Universal Brotherhood which includes the whole of life, Theosophy is bringing you into potent contact with the glorious fruits of experiences which for you have ended in triumph, though the way has been a way of purification by fire—by the fire of pain and sorrow.

### THE FRUITS OF EXPERIENCE

1. What are these fruits which now you hold in your hand? The knowledge that no difference of form affects the universal unity of life.

2. The knowledge that all life, be its forms what they may, is on one mighty way beginning in lowliest unconsciousness and proceeding onwards stage by stage to those towering self-realizations of majesty which stand revealed in the Saviours and Teachers, the Rulers of the world. And beyond even these compelling Witnesses to the glory of the future of each one of us must surely stand Witnesses of loftier stature still.



3. The knowledge that even the most distant and apparently most inaccessible heights of the marvellous intricacies of life as we perceive it in manifestation will some day be climbed even by ourselves, and on these very summits themselves we shall gaze with rapturous and eager delight upon the feats of mountaineering still before us.

4. The knowledge that thus to achieve is sure. We have the Will. It has been with us in seed. It is now perhaps in bud. Some day it will be in flower. We have the Wisdom. It has been with us in seed. It is now perhaps in bud. Some day it will be in flower. We have the Time. It has been with us in motion infinitely slow. It is now perhaps in a condition of slight acceleration. Some day Eternity will take its place.

5. The knowledge that we must look forward, not backward; forward into the Sunlight, not backwards into the darkness: that in the spirit of the future must we live in the present; not in the spirit of the present itself, still less in the spirit of the past save as it is a shining intimation of the future: that we must not waste time upon the lessons already learned: that these lower bodies of ours must now cease to be masters and take their rightful place as servants.

6. The knowledge that the science of life is still marvelous beyond our ken, beyond the keenest ken of wisest man or woman living in the outer world; but that no region is beyond our ultimate reach, no mystery beyond our ultimate unravelment.

All this seems to me to be an irresistible incentive to address ourselves to the beginnings of achievement. Just as the athlete goes into training for some great accomplishment of body, so must we — Theosophists and therefore athletes of mind, of emotions, of the higher consciousness, as well as of body — go into training, strict as the measure of our wills.

#### TRAINING FOR VICTORY

If the mind is to be keen and receptive, the body and the emotions must be healthy and pure. If the emotions and the body are to be healthy and pure, the mind must be the shining mirror of the will. *Mens sana in corpore sano*, without doubt. But no less *Corpus sanus ex menta sana*. Indeed, the latter is more true, for the body of the mind is far larger than the body of the earth. And the awareness of the intuition and of all other faculties of the higher consciousness depends upon the perfect co-ordination and subordination of the lower vehicles — body, emotions, mind.

To enjoy the fullest advantage, therefore, of membership of the Theosophical Society and of being a Theosophist you must take as much care of the body and of the emotions as of any other function of the self. And in this connection I want to reassert the vitally important fact that you must not waste time in repeating experiences with which you have finished — be these experiences of the mind, of the emotions, or of the body.

You have finished with the experiences of poisoning the physical body with meat-eating, smoking, alcoholic indulgence, the taking of stupefying drugs save under very exceptional circumstances, and with all crude and coarse movements.

You have finished with the experiences of poisoning the emotional body with anger, hatred, contempt, sexual promiscuity, and all other emotional crudities and coarseness.

You have finished with the experiences of poisoning the body of the mind with selfish pride and prejudice, with intolerance and bigotry, with superstition and cruelty, and all other mental crudities and coarseness.

Your Higher Self, the Will, no longer intends any of these, desires any of these, can tolerate any of these. Yet are they experiences through which the lower bodies must needs pass in the earlier stages of their growth, and perforce the Self must acquiesce, just as a mother knows that the little child must needs thread the way of ignorance so that it may find the way of wisdom.

Furthermore, I realize that you may not *quite* have finished with them as you enter upon this new youth of yours. You may say that you do not remember these experiences and feel that you must run through them—"again, if you like to say so. Or you may wish to recapitulate the lessons you know you have already learned.

So be it. Your membership of the Theosophical Society and interest in Theosophy is a sign of your having rent asunder all these prison bars. From these prisons you are in fact free. But if for any reason you feel you must go back to prison, then by all means return—it is no other person's business to try to dictate to you what you should and what you should not do. But if you return to prison, it is my fervent hope that you will quickly break the bars again; for you are not really prisoners in those prisons, though I readily admit that you are prisoners in other prisons. We all are.

May I reiterate? Whether or not in waking consciousness you are not aware of the fact, your positive contact with Theosophy and the Theosophical Society clearly indicates that you have reached a certain level of evolution, a certain stage on the evolutionary pathway. You have, let us say, matriculated in the University of Life, and are on your way to graduation: and thence to wondrous postgraduate courses. It may take time to bring down into the waking consciousness this remarkable fact—possibly a life or two, or some years. But there it is, eager for recognition and acceptance.

You will be saying to me that there may be many members of the Theosophical Society who indulge in some or perhaps even in all those experiences which I assert to be in fact behind them. There may be many members who do not believe in vegetarianism, in non-smoking, in abstention from wine-drinking, and so forth. Very likely. I remember that while I joined the Society in 1895 it was not until 1910 that I gave up some of these experiences.



Membership of the Theosophical Society neither confers upon us immediate remembrance of all that we have experienced before, nor does it demand abstention from any of the experiences I have enumerated above, save, perhaps, that of deliberate unbrotherliness to a fellow-member calculated to deny him that freedom to believe and freedom to seek which must be upheld at all costs. And even then the demand is more in the nature of hope. There is no compulsion.

Yet I firmly believe that it is the Higher Self which really joins the Theosophical Society, in the full knowledge that its vehicles down here are ready for membership, even though for the time being they may not be conscious of such readiness. The Higher Self may lead into membership very willing vehicles, or it may take its vehicles by the scruff of their necks, so to speak, and hurl them into membership. The spirit is undoubtedly willing. In some cases the flesh is weak; in others it is strong. And for the time desires of the flesh may override the needs of the spirit.

As a matter of fact, everything I have been saying to you is in truth, though I cannot give any proof, the utterance of your Higher Self. It is your own Higher Self speaking to you. It is my Higher Self speaking to me, too.

#### MAKE WAY FOR THE SELF

Allow the Higher Self to have its say, even if not, for the moment, its way; even though the lower vehicles may be temporarily inclined to turn a deaf ear to its exhortations. But if your memory be good enough for you to remember down here that you have finished with some of these experiences, and therefore cease to indulge in them, for goodness sake do not think yourself superior to those whose memories are not as good as yours. Their memories may for the time being be more defective. But their wills may in fact be far stronger than yours. Their time for remembrance may not yet have come. When it does come they may pass you by as if you were standing still. In ways other than such remembrance they may be far ahead of you. So, while you may be thankful that your memory is as good as it is, leave others to go their own ways at their own rates. You have the right and the duty to draw attention to the need for remembrance. You have neither the right nor the duty to demand that any shall remember, nor to imagine that their forgetfulness in this particular definitely places them on a lower rung of the evolutionary ladder. Live in the spirit of your own remembrances. They, too, are living in the spirit of theirs. In any case, the lower vehicles are gradually responding to the beneficent guidance of the Athlete who is the Higher Self, so that the physical body is becoming an athlete, the emotional body is becoming an athlete, the mental body is becoming an athlete—quite a family of athletes in fact. What next?

I draw your attention to the second of the suggestions I made in connection with membership of the Theosophical Society.



The first was, you may remember, that the forgetful desires of the lower vehicles must not be allowed to interfere with the plans of the Higher Self; that membership must be real, athletic. We have been dealing with this.

### REAL MEMBERSHIP

The second was that this real membership must be made vivid and fiery in the outer world — a matter of pride and championship, never a matter of apology or concealment, still less, of course, of shame. It must be active, not passive; alive, not dead.

Now how are we to make this membership — purified in some measure at least of clogging dross — fiery, vivid, a matter of intense pride, active, alive?

### ENTHUSIASM

To start with, *Enthusiasm*. Youth ought to be tremendously keen about everything — about themselves, about their studies, about their games and leisure, about their hobbies, about their relatives and friends, about a love for animals, about their plans and hopes for the future. Youth should be bubbling over with happiness and anticipation. Youth is the time for the enthusiasm which makes everything desirable seem delightfully possible, for the enthusiasm which quickly forgets the frustrations and ever looks forward to the fruitions. Youth is the time for the enthusiasm of re-making the world, and for the enthusiasm of feeling how tremendously worth living life is. Let it not be thought, however, that age — when you come to it — must needs be without enthusiasm. Youth will, perhaps, be quickly enthusiastic, impulsively enthusiastic, possibly even inconsiderately enthusiastic. Age can be enthusiastic no less, more slowly enthusiastic, perhaps, more cautiously enthusiastic, more deliberately enthusiastic: enthusiastic to make the very best that can be made of the world as it is, not expecting miraculous changes, but knowing that the world steadily grows better if we try to make the best even of the bad things. Age can also have the intriguing enthusiasm of feeling a wonderful nearness to the future, looking through the gateway of death to the magic marvels of a regenerated life.

And some rare souls there may be who are privileged to be able to continue in age the enthusiasm of youth, so that defeat means nothing to them, failure means nothing to them, despair is a condition unknown to them, and in the very worst they perceive a better, waiting for release. In youth the enthusiasm of youth predominates. As youth grows older this enthusiasm mellows, and to its enrichment is added the enthusiasm which should be the companion of advancing years. Youth, perhaps, is more enthusiastic over the things of time, while the enthusiasm of age is more concerned with the things of the eternal. But to those

rare souls to whom I have just referred time and eternity are one. Eternity but incarnates as time, as "still" or "slow motion" is but a manipulation of speed-depicting film. I shall hope that you are enthusiastic about the glorious vistas which Theosophy offers to the adventurous mind, urged forward by a determined will. I shall hope that the splendid teachings on which Theosophy lays stress are giving you so great a sense of the law and order and justice and tenderness and certainty of life that you feel at once wondrously at ease and happily anticipative of each moment of your lives as, turning the corner, it comes down the road to meet you. You know it is for your development, for your growth, for your release, and whatever it is you welcome it and make the best of it; for it is the best that can come to you in fact even if not in appearance. With Theosophy you are safe. The future is sure. And you go forward to meet it joyously, without a whimper for trouble, nor a cry of agony for catastrophe. The future is sure. All that happens meanwhile is the means to reach it. Hence, you study Theosophy with all the ardour of what I pray may be a lasting infatuation; and the infection of your enthusiasm causes others to do the same, so that you have the delight of studying the greatest science in the world among spirits kindred to your own.

I shall hope that these two enthusiasms will cause you to become a fiery pillar of support to your Lodge, be its circumstances what they may. I am well aware that in very rare cases Lodges of the Theosophical Society are sometimes so conducted that their tendency is in the direction rather of quenching than of encouraging enthusiasm. I know that in such circumstances often it is almost impossible to arouse any enthusiasm either for the members of a Lodge or for its meetings. I know that the restless vitality of youth is sometimes, even though rarely, frowned upon in disapproval. It may be open to you to establish a Youth Lodge where you can be, as it were, at home. I recognize that such a course is very often necessary. At the same time I should like to see wherever possible the young and the old at work, at study, even at play up to a certain point, *together*. The young need the old; for they themselves will be old before very long, and they should take object-lessons in what to stress and what to avoid. The old need the young; for they will be young before very long, and they too should take object lessons in what to stress and what to avoid. No Lodge of the Theosophical Society should be composed entirely of older people; for the appeal of Theosophy is even greater to youth than to age, or at least as great, and there must be something radically wrong with its presentation by age if youth fight shy of it. I am strongly of opinion that the right presentation of Theosophy — have we yet discovered it — will give us a preponderance of youth in our Society for all time to come, and thus make it safe for ever.



## THEOSOPHY APPLIED

It is of the highest importance that the teachings of Theosophy shall be studied not as remote theories which have no urgent relation to the circumstances of daily life, but as live facts at work everywhere, entering into everything, part and parcel of the daily lives of all.

The very condition of the world, with all its joys and sorrows, hardships and opportunities, ease and dis-ease, with all its depression and inequalities, with all its seeming injustices, with all its cruelties and hatreds, suspicions and prejudices, with all its intolerance and pride and narrowness, is the science of Theosophy in operation. If there be joys and sorrows, both are opportunities, both are necessary to those who experience them; if there be hardships, and ease and dis-ease, these no less are messengers of hope and justice; if there be depression, it is essential to the learning of a lesson which perhaps the world is slow to learn; if there be inequalities and injustices, and cruelties, hatreds, suspicions, and prejudices, if there be intolerance, pride and narrowness, if there be danger of war, if there be a triumph of might over right — all these are the Law at work, evolution at work, ignorance receding painfully while truth advances hesitantly. The world has, and therefore needs, all the good and all the so-called "evil" existing in it. There is nothing about which to despair. *Magna est Theosophia et prevalebit*; for Theosophy is the science, the way, the art, the very soul, of growth. Theosophy has brought us where we are, and will take us onwards and onwards for ever. We must fight against wrong, strive with wrong, as from time to time we understand wrong. Such is part of the Law. But there is nothing outside the Law. There are no foes the Law need fear, for foes and friends are the Law's agents doing the Law's will, and bringing happiness to the children of Law — the whole of manifested life. God — define the mnemonic as you will — *is*: all's well with the world. There are no dark ages. All ages are movements towards the Light. That which the world needs it has.

The Law of Evolution is determining the nature of each moment of our lives — not in a spirit of hard necessity, but under the compelling motive power of that glowing freedom which is the heart of all being. The Law of Reincarnation has brought us where we are and will take us onwards towards the Light, even though we may seem to be making no progress at all. The Law of Cause and Effect is ceaselessly at work meting out to us justice, even though to our time-obscured eyes injustice may appear to reign unchecked. The Law of Love is ever at work making us safe for ever, even though hatred seems to be swaying the hearts of men. The principle of the Hierarchy of life assures us of constant help from Those beyond us on the evolutionary road, but no less points out to us that as we ourselves receive from Them so must we give to those less fortunate than ourselves. The principle

must we give to those less fortunate than ourselves. The principle of the planes of Consciousness shows us that we are only at the beginning of self-expression, that the emotions and the mind are but lower forms of a consciousness which stretches upwards into dazzling regions of self-expression impossible to describe. So in every aspect of its teachings Theosophy gives assurance, courage, delight, aspiration, an unquenchable *joie de vivre*, and hearts which must indeed be ever restless till they find their rest in perfect harmony with the supreme Divinity of Life.

May I not hope that this Theosophy of ours is so sparkingly alive with the very essence of your own youth spirit that you cherish it with burning ardour and hold it proudly aloft for all to see? Do you not feel that Theosophy is in fact the very science of Eternal Youth, that Theosophy is the very incarnation of the true spirit of Youth? If your elders do not so present it to you it is their fault and not the fault of Theosophy. I beg of you not to turn away from Theosophy, nor to deem it after all uninspiring, because of the dull, cold forms in which it may sometimes be presented to you. Theosophy is the light of life, the fire of life, the glory of life, the happiness of life. Theosophy makes life worth living under all circumstances. Theosophy gives hope to those who despair, peace to those who are weary, understanding to those who feel perplexed, comradeship to the lonely, courage to those whom adversity seems to crush underfoot. Theosophy gives these to you. Have you made them, or are you making them, yours? Are you proudly passing them on to a world in fact athirst for them?

#### TO EACH HIS OWN REALITY

I shall hope that you will be enthusiastic to make Theosophy, the Theosophical Society and your Lodge a living force, a veritable beaconlight or lighthouse, in your surroundings; so that our science is regarded with growing interest, our Society with deepening respect, and the Lodge with ever-increasing thankfulness. Theosophy must be observed to make its votaries better members of their families, better workers, better citizens, better members of the Faith to which they may happen to belong, optimists everywhere and at all times. Theosophy should intensify the real in each one of us, and relegate to the subconscious depths that which would, at our own particular stage of evolution, be unreal, out of date, were it to function upon the surface. To each his own Reality—differing radically, perhaps, according to temperament, race, nationality, faith, environment, upbringing, stage of unfoldment. But Theosophy, eternal science of life as it is, can be all things to all types of reality, however divergent these may be one from another, however much in apparent opposition.

Of course, at any particular time in the growth of an individual, or of a nation, or of a race, or of a faith, there may be some special, possibly unusual, type of Reality which needs emphasis if the right rate of growth is to be maintained. Just as a teacher in a



school may know that at such and such a time a child needs such and such a lesson, is ready for such and such a lesson, and proceeds to impart the lesson without the child knowing anything about the fact that he has been adjudged to need the lesson — so in the world-school the World-Teachers may perceive that humanity, or a section of it, or an individual in it, or a particular persuasion, needs to learn some special lesson, to understand a particular truth. Those concerned may have no realization of such need, may quite likely deny the need, hold something of an entirely contrary nature to be the real need. The lesson will probably be given in spite of such as these. But how many Theosophists are there eager to try to know what is really best for the world, apart from that which the world may think to be best for itself? How many teachers are strong enough, and loving enough, to give a child that which the child does not want and will resent, if they know that the child will benefit immensely from what the child may, in its ignorance, deem to be a tyranny? There should be a few Theosophists — there cannot be many — who are learning to be impersonal agents of the Law and of the Givers of the Law. It is a very difficult task to accomplish, and only to be attempted by a very few.

#### THEOSOPHY AT WORK

I shall hope, then, that you will so interpret your Theosophy as to make Theosophy, the Society and the Lodge sincerely welcome. I hope you will have enthusiasm for the Golden Chains, Lotus Circles and Round Tables, whereby those younger even than yourselves find a happy playground sparkling with the Theosophical spirit. If these activities seem dull and uninspiring, remember that they can be, are intended to be, vibrant with life and interest, especially to the very young. We elders are in fault if Golden Chains, Lotus Circles and Round Tables fail to attract or hold. I hope you will have enthusiasm for the Theosophical Order of Service, whereby your individual interpretations of Theosophy may be applied to the service of the outer world in its problems, its mistakes, its efforts and ideals. The Theosophical Society as such cannot intervene in specialised aspects of the world's affairs. The Society cannot as such declare that it is opposed to dictatorships and in favour of democracy, or vice versa. The Society cannot as such declare a special affinity with some particular religion. The Society cannot as such declare its endorsement of the Douglas Credit Scheme, of the League of Nations, of Anti-Vivisection, of Vegetarianism, of No-More-War, of a United States of Europe, of the Monroe Doctrine, of Prohibition, of Pan-Americanism, or of any particular panacea for any particular ill current at any particular time. The Society cannot as such denounce anything, not even any individual member's pet abhorrence! The Society is not a sect, nor a Church, nor a political party, nor a movement to propagate some special antidote to some prevailing ill. Theosophy is not a religion,

and must not be classed as one among the various religions; nor is it some special philosophy invented more or less *ad hoc* by H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, and perhaps expanded by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater. Theosophy is the veritable all-including Science of Life — a Science which these very protagonists themselves have only understood in part. They, too, are but students of Theosophy as we are, albeit in a far higher class.

### THE THREE REALITIES

The Theosophical Society exists in part to proclaim a special Reality urgently needed by the world today — the Reality of universal brotherhood; in part to gain through study emphasis of another Reality — the Reality that the great religions have a common origin in superhuman sources; in part to draw attention to a third Reality — the Reality that we are but at the beginning of our understanding of life and life's functions, that such knowledge as we have today is but a poor shadow of the knowledge which remains to be known, and that our most cherished convictions will be subject, as knowledge grows, to radical modification. You probably perceive that these great Realities have no overt or immediate connection with any of the details of life, though a very real connection none the less; that they leave you perfectly free to interpret them as seems good to you, as they leave your fellow-members no less free to interpret these Realities as may seem good to them. And we all have to learn that differences do not alter brotherhood, neither does membership in opposing camps of endeavour sanction personal animosities or a sense either of irreconcilable hostility, or of self-satisfied superiority.

But you must take your Theosophy abroad into the world's affairs. You must take it just as you understand it, no matter how different this understanding may be from that of your fellow-members. Do not fall into the error that there is an orthodoxy in the Theosophical Society — that the "good" Theosophist believes in the Masters, accepts the truth of karma and reincarnation, takes the existence of angels for granted, has unquestioning faith in so and so's revelations, is in close sympathy with the Liberal Catholic Church and Co-Masonry, and has no doubt whatever that Mr. Krishnamurti really is a messenger of the World-Teacher, whatever even Mr. Krishnamurti himself may say. All these may be opinions of certain members of the Theosophical Society, or even of a majority of them. But while the essential spirit of freedom for which the Society stands enables these and other views to be held with vigour and propagated with enthusiasm, that selfsame spirit leaves members free to hold views entirely opposed to these, or of a kind radically divergent.

Your own truest service both to yourself and to the Theosophical Society is to discover the best that is in you, with the help of the illumination of the Theosophy you know, *your* Theosophy, and to give that best to your world, hopeful that others are doing the same, and happy if they are.



I shall hope, therefore, that your enthusiasm causes you to be a live wire, a positive force, with a clear-cut, definite message — the material of which should be *your* Theosophy, and the cut your own temperamental inclination. I hope that some of you are artists, musicians, sculptors, dancers, actors, perhaps producers, playwrights, poets: for the world needs to be delivered from the blight of ugliness which seems to be settling down in the fields of culture and refinement. A Theosophist, if the soul of Theosophy has entered his being, must be refined, must be dignified, must have self-control, must have grace, must have poise — all these at least in the process of becoming. Hence an artist, or a musician, or a sculptor, or a dancer, or an actor, or a playwright, or a poet, *who is also a Theosophist*, can give ever so much more than one who is not; though I am bound to say that this does not mean that he must be a member of the Theosophical Society. There are many Theosophists scattered all over the world who are not members of the Theosophical Society, nor are ever likely to be. There are many Theosophists scattered all over the world, who, perhaps, have never heard of Theosophy. Better to have heard, no doubt, better to be a member of our great army; but best to *be* a Theosophist.

And let me add here, lest it appear that I expect every member of the Society to be a man or a woman of action, that I perceive as much scope for enthusiasm in dreaming, in visions, in contemplation and meditation, as in so-called activity itself. It is all a matter of temperament, of mode of self-expression and of service. We need the dreamer to dream, and the visionary to see, no less than the man or woman of action to do. Often do the former make possible the actions of the latter, just as the latter make fruitful the dreamings of the former. We need the hero, the genius, the martyr. But we need no less the saint, the devotee, the mystic.

I have dwelt long on this fire of enthusiasm, but I offer no apology for so doing, since this fire is the veritable heart of youth. Without it, no true youthfulness. With it, the beginnings of eternal youth.

Let us now take the next ingredient of vivid membership — *courage*.

### COURAGE

Ought I to have placed courage first? I think that courage comes — of course I mean the courage that is sure and steady, not intermittent courage — when we are beginning to be certain as to that about which it is worth while to be courageous. Enthusiasm seeks and finally discovers that about which it is worth while to be courageous. Then courage comes; and enthusiasm gives life to the courage that has come, and goes on its way of discovery seeking other justifications for more and other courage. So let us be enthusiastic first, but courageous too if we can, and then let courage — shadow, reflection of the will entering into

its kingship of these lower regions — stand side by side with the enthusiasm to make a splendid pair.

Enthusiasm may, generally does, wax and wane, but true courage shines steadily at all times. When enthusiasm may falter amidst the flings and arrows of adverse fortune, receiving no encouragement from without, dragging down its possessor into loneliness and disrepute, courage, steel-fashioned, looks the flings and arrows full in the face and smiles as they have their way, shrugs its shoulders at the frowns of the outer world, and takes its possessor smilingly down into the regions of loneliness and disrepute — happy to be lonely and disreputable for the sake of that which has brought the courage forth.

True courage is quiet, calm, deliberate, immovable, one-pointed — antithesis and therefore the complement of enthusiasm. Where indeed would true enthusiasm be without courage? But where also would true courage be without enthusiasm? Does not courage need enthusiasm for its perfect expression? Courage plods along, seeks no outer recognition, is unmoved by adversity, points as steadily to the star of its rectitude as the magnetic needle to the North. Courage is enthusiasm's better half — the '*Shakti*' of enthusiasm. And I hope that even when enthusiasm sometimes wanes, as wane it does, courage will remain to carry on — blindly, perhaps — true servant of the will when mind and emotions desert. Have not Theosophists at least reached the stage when the "Yes" of the will, of the higher consciousness, may now and then be heard and given precedence over the "No" of mind or of emotions? For Theosophists it is the will which must be the final arbiter, neither the mind nor the emotions; proudly installed in tinsel sovereignty though the mind is in this age of mind-pre-eminence, when the mind is still the latest toy of humanity and fascinates accordingly. How rare and yet how wonderful, when faith is gone and intellectual acquiescence, for the will to step in and hold the fort!

#### WILL THE KING

When your mental and emotional interest in Theosophy for the time diminishes; when former enthusiasms disappear; when your mind — sure of its hold over you — begins again its game of destructive criticism and disintegration; when your emotions — ever seeking new sources for their stirring — start moving away to fresh fields and pastures new; when those around you, slaves of public opinion, of conventionality, of orthodoxy, are at last about to win penetration into the armour of your independence with the sharp arrows of their self-conscious superiority — "what is good enough for the rest of us should surely be good enough for you," — when, after unremitting persuasion, you begin to yield to the importunities of friends and relatives to become like them again instead of trying to be like yourself: how wonderful at such times as those if, with mind and emotions yielding to the pressure of the static, your will steps in to carry



on — empty though the lesser *you* be of enthusiasm, empty of the cooperation of the mind, cold amidst the burnt out embers of the fire of enthusiasm, indifferent within, but to all outward appearances as staunch as ever. Is this hypocrisy? Not if somewhere you recognise, even against the urgings of mind or of emotions, that the Theosophy you once cherished mentally and emotionally is true, is indeed the veritable Science of Life, is indeed a gift from the Gods, the nectar of eternal happiness. For this, courage is needed, and courage alone is left. And I emphasise courage, for I want you to have it when enthusiasm deserts you, when your mind deserts you, when your emotions desert you, when you are on the threshold of letting go an opportunity the seizing of which is about to lead you to peace and happiness, when you are about to fall back into the obscurity of crowds, among pale individualities which are but the feeble reflections of their surroundings, vegetating as chameleons, instead of living as Gods in the becoming. The mind may superciliously and in all assurance say "No". The emotions may change from sympathy to antipathy, and themselves say "No". Are you a Theosophist by the grace of your will, as well as by the grace of mind and emotions? If so, you will find the will saying "Yes", and sooner or later mind and emotions will come to heel.

Yes, courage must be with us — for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, through the gateway of death into the forever. And I am thinking of courage not merely on special occasions and for the time, but of that continuous, almost retiring, courage which moves almost stealthily about among the little daily things of the inconspicuous life, among the humdrum things of life, among the hidden things of home and family. In these indeed courage is often at her purest, and is most beautiful.

It often takes very noble courage to answer the harshness and and injustice of those who may be near and dear with silence or at least with gentleness.

It often takes courage to give up or to give in. It often takes courage to stand firmly under oppression, misunderstanding, and perhaps even contempt.

It often takes courage to remain a Theosophist and a member of the Theosophical Society, when it might be so easy to explain: "I simply had to give up my membership, to cease my Theosophical studies, for the sake of my family, for the sake of peace in my family." How many say things like these, forgetting that it is far better even for the family, for the *karma* of its members, that you should remain quietly steadfast to the truth you know, than that they should bring upon themselves the frustrating *karma* of having successfully diverted you from the straight and narrow way which leads to your, and if only they knew it, to their, salvation. You can help them more by withstanding their ignorant importunities, than by allowing these to conquer truth. If, for the sake of retaining affection, or for the sake of maintaining peace, or for the sake of comfort or ease, you become a traitor —

be the justification or pressure what they may — to your Higher Self, then not only do you inflict upon yourself a grievous injury, but you set in motion the processes of the great Law whereby that affection shall be broken, that peace shall become conflict, that comfort and ease shall change into hardship and affliction. Bad *karma* enough for those who seek to induce you to abandon truth and the comradeship of those who form an advance-guard for the world — even though doubtless they know not really what they do. But you make the *karma* far worse for them, and cause it to converge upon yourself, if you allow yourself to retreat from a freedom you know — and have the opportunity to share — into the prison of times gone by. You make the prison stronger and freedom more remote. You help to retain in chains those from whom you might have cast them off. It may be hard to resist. It may seem suicidal to resist. What price are you prepared to pay for truth? Do you hope to bargain, or do you say: Let the price be what it may? Have you the intuition to realize this? Have you the courage to put it into practice?

I shall hope, therefore, that as enthusiasm burns steadily, there rises within courage to enrich you with its most splendid wealth; strengthening you to stand alone if need be, fearless amidst persecution, ridicule, contempt, outrage, defeat. A member of the Theosophical Society is only a Theosophist in name if he is not beginning to feel the joy of righteous but utterly chivalrous battle, the peace of quiet but fiery loyalty to truth, be the cost what it may.

#### UNDERSTANDING

My next ingredient of vivid membership is *understanding*. I urge the harmonious combination of a spirit of strong individuality with a spirit, no less strong in its own way, of penetrating universality. But in order to reach universality we must pass through, and take with us as we go, the intervening and fulfilling individualities. Universalities are composed of individualities, and we must not forget this. I regard a vibrant individuality — every individuality must be vibrant if full self-expression is to be achieved — as essential to entry into the full richness of universality. Right individuality is essential to right family life. Right individuality and right family life are essential to right citizenship. Right citizenship is essential to a right nation. A right nation is essential to a right League of Nations, and to all Internationalism. So it comes to this, that we must be good patriots if we would be good internationalists, and good individuals if we would be good patriots. Similarly, in our Theosophical world, we must be right in the lesser areas in order to be right in the larger areas. Our First Object, for example, demands a spirit of understanding without distinction of race, creed, caste, sex or colour. But the achievement of such understanding depends, surely, upon the measure of our understanding in the smaller areas. Have we a true appreciation of ourselves, of our own



nation, of our own faith, of our own sex, of our own race? Do we enter fully and rightly into the spirit of all these? If we cannot fulfill the less how shall we fulfill the more?

### LIFE AMIDST THE HEIGHTS

Hence, I urge that each one of you should be busy about living up to the very edge itself of the circumference of every universe of your being. If you are a Hindu, a Christian, a Mussalman, a Buddhist, a Parsi, or a Jew, are you living to the utmost power of self-realization in your faith, making it serve you to the utmost? Are you, in other words, fulfilling your faith? If you feel indifferent to the faith in which you have been born, are you sure you have learned all its lessons; and, if you are sure, are you then learning substitute lessons, fulfilling that which for you is a substitute for the faith in which you have been born? If you are, as surely you must be, a citizen of a particular nation, are you fulfilling the spirit of true nationality to the utmost, are you trying to be the very best type of national? Are you burning with the purest, most lofty, form of nationalism you can conceive? If patriotism no longer moves you, are you sure you have learned its lessons, are you sure you are missing nothing, are you sure you have with you everything patriotism and nationalism can teach you? Are you living to the fullest measure whatever may be your substitute for nationalism, that which to you is beyond nationalism?

And if you have left this or that which to you seems less, to enter into that which to you seems more and better, have you the power to understand others who have not left that which to you is less, but which may not be so to them? I beg you not to forget that growing understanding is the sign of growing wisdom. If you are really leaving one prison after another, you are increasing in appreciative sympathy for those who, to your thinking, are remaining in the prisons you have left. There may come a time when you will suddenly discover that perhaps there are no prisons at all anywhere — that something which you thought to be a prison was after all your own mode of living in that which in fact was and is a garden. Religions repelled you? Perhaps the mistake lay with you and not with religions. Forms and ceremonies repelled you? Perhaps the mistake lay with you and not with the forms and ceremonies. Nationalism repelled you? Perhaps the mistake lay with you and not with nationalism. I think you will come to this conclusion after you have finished denouncing this and that and the other as prisons — theoretically because to you they are dead; really, perhaps, because you have been dead in them. If you have hated anything, then in all certainty the fault has been with you far more than with that which you have hated. If you still hate, you are at least in a prison of hatred, however much you may be hating a prison.

I do not care to say: Come away from this, from that, from the other. I would rather say: Understand this and that and the

other. I would rather suggest to you that there are no prisons anywhere save those that are of our own making — that we may live anywhere *free*, provided we ourselves are free. There can be no greater service to render to one's fellow-man than to enter his home, be it a form, a ceremony, a creed, a philosophy, a purpose, and to live in a spirit of freedom in his home. If he himself be dwelling freely within it he will welcome you delightedly. If it be imprisoning him you will be showing him how to be free and yet to keep his home. There is nowhere where one may not dwell freely, for all is of God, the Logos, Life. It is how we live and not where we live that matters.

### IF HE KNOWS HOW!

So the Theosophist is supremely understanding. In his own small and insignificant way he too, like Sri Krishna, meets each wayfarer on the road he is travelling and respectfully suggests to him how to move more swiftly, more joyfully, to the road's great end. The Theosophist can be a Christian to the Christian, a Hindu to the Hindu, a Mussalman to the Mussalman, a Buddhist to the Buddhist, a Parsi to the Parsi, a Jew to the Jew — if he knows how! So also can he be to American, Englishman, Scotchman, Irishman, Welshman, Frenchman, German, Indian, Japanese, and to every other national throughout the world — if he knows how! So also can he be to followers of every mode of thought — if he knows how! He can be all things to all men — if he knows how! But as a Theosophist he cannot dwell in the midst of hatred save just to show the way of transcendence. He will understand even hatred, and be able to enter into the spirit of it. But for most of us hatred belongs to a mode of evolution beyond which we should have passed; and we must not retrace our steps. Even then be sure that that which you are perceiving is really a hatred outside you and not the projection of a hatred you yourself still possess.

There is no more beautiful graciousness, or brotherliness, or generosity, no deeper and more lovely truth, no greater wisdom, no more compelling power, than understanding. Let understanding — strong, purposeful, creative — be your life.

Thus do we come to the last of the ingredients of a vivid and fiery membership of the Theosophical Society — *Reverence*.

### REVERENCE

To understand all, says the French proverb, is to forgive all. I will add that to understand all is to reverence all. Surely this must be so, for there is naught but life anywhere, and all life is from God, is Divine. But to me reverence means something which transcends its usual mode of expression in worship, adoration, devotion. Reverence means the power to enter into the heart of each living thing and to find it beautiful, wonderful, holy. The form may appear ugly. The very life itself may seem to be an ugly distortion of what it ought to be. Form and life may seem



to be a fit subject for disgust and abhorrence. Yet all is Light for those who have the eyes to see, as I am afraid few of us have. Reverence is the power to see the Light in all things, in the things of darkness no less than in the things which shine. And when that power has been achieved then comes the perception of every form of life — animate and so called “inanimate” — as harbouring a King Who waits for His release. In some forms and lives the King has still far to go, very far. In some the King is well on His way. In some He has reached the half-way post and is at last turning homewards. I trust that you and I are near this post. In a few of these forms and lives there are Kings on the threshold of their coronation. And beyond these there are Kings upon thrones, royal in their power.

I am hoping that as Theosophists, knowing somewhat of the nature of life, its purpose and its way, you are beginning to contact this universal Kingship, so that you can no longer live crudely, roughly, vulgarly, contemptuously, irreverently, towards anybody or anything. Your enthusiasm is in reality to release the craving for Kingship in yourselves and in all that lives about you. Your courage is to maintain untarnished at all costs the Kingship you know you have, whether in yourselves or in others. Your understanding is to see Kingship everywhere. Your reverence is to keep in constant contact with Kingship everywhere, and in no wise whatever to interpose a barrier at any time between the King that is each one of you and your fellow-Kings in every kingdom of nature. Theosophy shows us that there is every reason for reverence, and for enthusiasm, courage and understanding no less. Theosophy demands reverence, enthusiasm, courage, understanding: these are the natural expressions, in certain terms, of Theosophy. A Theosophist who has reached a certain stage in his experience of Theosophy must needs be reverent, enthusiastic, courageous. He can be no other. But note that I have used the word “experience”. Merely intellectually to study Theosophy, merely to believe in Theosophy in a general sort of way, merely to accept this, that or the other teaching on the authority of a person or of a book, is by no means to have experience of Theosophy. You must, sooner or later, discover Theosophy for yourselves. You must know the truth of *karma* for yourselves, the truth of reincarnation, the truth of the hierarchical government of the world and the existence of Masters, the splendours of the planes of consciousness, and an ever-increasing perception of that which lies behind the words: God is; Life grows. Others have gained some of these experiences. You can gain them too. You must gain them too, or Theosophy is unreal and futile; which some know it is not and have declared that it is not. And as experience after experience comes to you, so will enthusiasm grow from more to more, and courage too, but also will more and more of reverence in you dwell. Thus is it that we make one music as before — there is in truth only one music to make, but as we know more the music becomes vaster

and vaster until it fills both earth and sky in praise and thanksgiving.

#### FORWARD IN KINGSHIP

Young brethren, you are young in body but of a surety not young in soul. You have come into membership of the Theosophical Society and into contact with Theosophy because you have come thus far on life's pathway. Good *karma* — opportunities seized in lives gone by — brings you to the threshold of a further stage in the unfoldment of your Kingship. And, no less wonderful, you are young at a time when the world is being re-made, is born anew, when a new age is rising out of this Golden Age in the midst of which we are, though perhaps its gold seems dimmed and tarnished by all that makes life so hard for so many. The future lies about you, and you, being young, belong to it. Never lived at any time a youth more fortunate than you. Never at any time had youth more splendid opportunities. This life may verily be the life of lives for many of you, for it may be the life at the end of which you are at last beginning to know the real nature of your Kingship, and to knock at the very door itself of the outer court of the Temple in the Sanctum Sanctorum of which your coronation shall take place.

If you can make Theosophy your life, and all about you see its Light in you; if you can make your will your Sovereign, ruling the emotions and the mind; if you can be to all who are about you comrade, leader and protecting friend; if you will strive not once to falter, or, if you do, give way to no despair; if you can be a shining Star amidst the darkness, will unperturbed though mind and heart desert; if you will ever seek the Truth, though naught but failure greets you; if you will seek her till at last she comes: then indeed are you on the threshold of your Kingship, and as the doorway of the Temple opens to admit you to its outer court the Light within shines out upon the world and brings the whole of life nearer to the goal. No one can grow without helping others on their way. There is indeed no growth but service. You are members of the Theosophical Society. You are, therefore, servants of the world. You are Theosophists. Your service shall, therefore, be wise.

May you all be worthy of Those Who gave the Theosophical Society to the world! May you be worthy of Their splendid messengers! May you approach the Divine Wisdom of Theosophy in a spirit of humility, of dignity, of purity, so that through you Wisdom is exalted and made pleasing to the eyes of men!



